



## The Illinois Hires Heroes Consortium

The Illinois Hires Heroes Consortium (IHHC) is a group of elite Illinois employers who recognize the great value veterans bring to the workplace and operationalize the term "veteran-friendly" by implementing veteran recruitment, training and retention practices. Members of the Consortium are Illinois employers who commit to at least three initiatives – one relating to recruitment, one relating to HR training, and one relating to retention and support practices.

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) will actively assist participants in meeting the simple goals that will lead the employer on the path to recruiting and retaining high-quality veteran candidates. Employers will be publicly recognized by Governor Pat Quinn and will be allowed to use the Illinois Hires Heroes logo to market themselves as veteran-friendly.

**Employers can join the Illinois Hires Heroes Consortium at:**

**[www.illinoishiresheroes.com](http://www.illinoishiresheroes.com)**.

*If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) or the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES). These staff are specifically tasked to help you better understand and effectively implement the veteran-friendly practices described in detail below.*

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**TAKE THE PLEDGE NOW!**

**1) Recruiting Practices   2) HR Training   3) Retention & Support Practices**



# Consortium Commitment Options

***Members commit to at least one initiative in each of the following categories:***

## **Recruiting Practices**

1. List job openings on [Illinois Job Link](#) and on the [Hero to Hired \(H2H\) job websites](#).
2. List job openings on [Illinois Job Link](#) and participate in at least two state-sponsored veteran hiring events in a calendar year.
3. List job openings on [Illinois Job Link](#) and utilize employment resources available through [Illinois Joining Forces](#).
4. List job openings on [Illinois Job Link](#) and establish relationships between your company's Illinois Hiring Managers and IDES's Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs).

## **Human Resources Training**

5. Participate in the Illinois Department of Employment Security's HR training on the value of hiring veterans and best practices in veteran recruitment, training, and retention practices. Alternate training options include those furnished by [Operation Employ Veterans](#) by Easter Seals, [America's Heroes at Work](#) by the U.S. Department of Labor – Veterans Employment and Training Service, and/or Syracuse University's [Institute for Veterans and Military Families](#).
6. Participate in the U.S. Department of Labor – Veterans Employment and Training Service's "USERRA 101" and "USERRA 102" online training modules.
  - a. [USERRA 101 Basic Web-Based](#)
  - b. [USERRA 102 Advanced Web-Based](#)
7. Participate in at least one of the three employer training webinars available through [Hiring Our Heroes](#), a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, or participate in at least one training webinar available through [The Value Of a Veteran](#).
8. Sign the [Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve \(ESGR\)](#) Statement of Support.

*Upon completion of one or more of the above-listed HR training practices, email Victor Enriquez at [Victor.Enriquez@illinois.gov](mailto:Victor.Enriquez@illinois.gov) notifying the IHHC Administrative Team of completion. Please attach relevant certificates of completion, screenshots, or registration documents to verify completion.*

## **Retention & Support Practices**

9. Highlight, on company media and web-based platforms, veteran hiring/employment support programs and initiatives on a recognizable tab/page for quick/efficient access.
10. Establish/promote an employee affinity group and/or corporate mentorship program for military veterans.
11. Utilize the [Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs](#) or [National Able](#) for post-employment support to assist veterans overcome their particular challenges.
12. Pay National Guard and Reserve members the differential between their normal wage and their National Guard wage when they are activated for duty.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Recruiting Practices

### 1. What is Illinois Job Link?

A: Illinois Job Link (IJL) is an Internet-based job search tool that features current job openings and includes both statewide and nationwide job banks. By enrolling in IJL, veterans will be able to navigate job opportunities; may qualify for assistance from IDES's veteran employment representatives (LVERs); and will be included in the main database used to search for qualified veterans as IDES works directly with major employers seeking to hire veterans. Most importantly, it's free to employers and job-seeking veterans. IDES staff is standing by to assist employers in listing their positions directly on IJL. For further information on IJL or assistance in enrolling, please visit: <https://illinoisjoblink.illinois.gov>.

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### 2. Who is H2H.jobs?

A: H2H.jobs is a free powerful tool for job seekers, with a multitude of innovative resources to help you find your next job. The site offers easy-to-use search features, a military skills translator, a career assessment survey, tips and advice, and professional networking opportunities. H2H.jobs helps guide you every step of the way in finding your next job. For further information on H2H, please visit: <https://h2h.jobs/>.

### 3. What are state sponsored veteran hiring events?

A: State sponsored veteran hiring events are supported by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) and/or the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) as a means to assist Illinois veterans with employment opportunities, job training, education, and specialty programs available for veterans and military spouses. For a listing of upcoming events, visit [www.ides.illinois.gov/Pages/EventsandWorkshops.aspx](http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Pages/EventsandWorkshops.aspx). For more information on how to participate in these events or others, please contact:

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OR

Contact Name: Max Dulberger, Office of the Assistant Director, IDVA  
Contact Phone Number: (312) 814-5538  
Contact Email: [Max.Dulberger@illinois.gov](mailto:Max.Dulberger@illinois.gov)

Contact Name: Rodrigo Garcia, IDVA Asst. Director  
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#### **4. What is Illinois Joining Forces?**

A: [Illinois Joining Forces](#) (IJF) is a network of 200+ public and not-for-profit organizations working together to improve services to Illinois' military and veteran communities. Administered jointly by the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs and Illinois Department of Military Affairs, the goal is to create a "no wrong door" system through which service members, veterans and their families can access the right resource at the right time, making a very overwhelming "sea of goodwill" more navigable for service providers and veterans alike. IJF also seeks to meet remaining gaps in services through the work of our member organization Working Groups, which design and implement projects to create best practices guides, train the civilian provider community in order to build system capacity, and more.

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OR

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#### **5. What is a Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER)?**

A: IDES's Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) conduct outreach to employers and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring managers to increase employment opportunities for veterans and generally assist veterans to gain and retain employment. LVER staff conduct seminars for employers and job search workshops for veterans seeking employment, and facilitate priority of service in regard to employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans by all staff of the employment service delivery system.

When using Illinois Job Link, take advantage of one-on-one assistance from your Local Veterans Employment Representative. The representative can guide you in describing and posting your job order so that you can match successfully to qualified job seekers. To contact your representative, call (877) 342-7533 and note that you are interested in meeting with the LVER in your area.

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## **Human Resources Training**

### **1. What is the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)?**

A: IDES provides unemployment insurance (UI), employment services and guidance to workers, job seekers, and employers through a statewide network of IDES offices and Illinois workNet centers. The agency combines federally-funded job training programs in Illinois into a "workforce development" system via which individuals can find a job or train for a new career. In addition, IDES statewide network of veteran employment representatives and employment specialists stand by to assist Illinois employers with varying employer services. For further information on IDES, please visit: <http://www.ides.illinois.gov/>.

IDES will provide a customized, in-person presentation, at no cost, to all interested human resource personnel on a monthly basis at a pre-designated location, date, and time. The presentation will communicate the value of hiring military veterans and illustrate best practices in veteran recruitment, training, and retention practices.

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### **2. What is Easter Seals – Operation Employ Veterans?**

A: Easter Seals Operation Employ Veterans is a no cost, Internet-based interactive program designed to outline the vast benefits veterans bring to an organization. The three one-hour modules are focused on providing human resource professionals, personnel recruiters, and intermediate supervisors training on the perceptions veterans face in the workplace around issues such as PTSD, TBI and other disabilities. Each module is designed to stand alone and can be used as a drop-in that can be added to any diversity training program, or as a comprehensive program designed to address individuals who may need workplace accommodations. For an alternative delivery method which includes a CD-ROM copy for \$75, please contact Easter Seals. For further information, please visit: [www.easterseals.com/our-programs/military-veterans/operation-employ-veterans.html](http://www.easterseals.com/our-programs/military-veterans/operation-employ-veterans.html).

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**3. What is the U.S. Department of Labor – America’s Heroes at Work Veteran Toolkit?**

A: Filled with useful information on hiring veterans, this Toolkit is designed to assist and educate employers who want to include veterans and wounded warriors in their recruitment and hiring initiatives. Featuring a straightforward six-step process, it pinpoints helpful tools and outlines important steps to take when designing a veterans hiring initiative. To obtain the free toolkit, please contact the Department of Labor – America’s Heroes at Work. For further information on the Veteran Toolkit, please visit: [www.americaheroesatwork.gov/](http://www.americaheroesatwork.gov/).

Contact Name: America’s Heroes at Work  
Contact Phone Number: (866) 4-USA-DOL  
Contact Email: [AmericasHeroesAtWork@dol.gov](mailto:AmericasHeroesAtWork@dol.gov)

**4. What is Syracuse University’s Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF)?**

A: The mission of Syracuse University’s IVMF is to fully leverage the intellectual, human and social capital of higher education, in service to America's veterans and their families. IVMF develops education and employment-focused programs in collaboration with industry, government, NGOs and the veteran community, to address the primary economic and public policy concerns of our nation's servicemen and women, and their families. For further information on IVMF, please visit: <http://vets.syr.edu>.

To access “The Guide to Leading Policies, Practices & Resources: Supporting the Employment of Veterans and Military Families,” is a collaborative effort of the Institute and more than 30 private sector employers and supporting organizations to delineate best practices, lessons learned and innovations tied to the recruitment, assimilation, retention and advancement of vets in the workforce. It is available as a PDF at <http://vets.syr.edu/pdfs/guidetoleadingpractices.pdf> for download. In addition, IVMF issued a brief, “The Business Case for Hiring a Veteran: Beyond the Clichés,” which draws from academic literature to suggest a robust, specific and compelling business case for hiring individuals with military background and experience. It is available at <http://vets.syr.edu/pdfs/The%20Business%20Case%20for%20Hiring%20a%20Veteran%203-6-12.pdf>.

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**5. What are the USERRA 101 and 102 online training modules?**

A: The training assists companies in understanding employee eligibility and job entitlements, employer obligations, and benefits and remedies under the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). USERRA protects the job rights of individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily leave employment positions to undertake military service or certain types of service in the National Disaster Medical System. USERRA also prohibits employers from discriminating against past and present members of the uniformed services, and applicants to the uniformed services. For further information on the USERRA online training, please visit: [www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra](http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra).

- [USERRA 101 Basic Web-Based](#)
- [USERRA 102 Advanced Web-Based](#)

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## 6. What are the Hiring Our Heroes Employer HR Training Webinars?

A: [Hiring Our Heroes](#), a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, was launched in March 2011 as a nationwide initiative to help veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities. Working with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's vast network of state and local chambers and strategic partners from the public, private, and non-profit sectors, the goal is to create a movement across America in hundreds of communities where veterans and military families return every day.

Hiring Our Heroes Employer Webinars are exceptional, no-cost opportunities for veteran-friendly employers to obtain expert training on best practices for effective recruitment and retention of veterans and military spouses. Three different webinars are offered, all one-hour in length:

- **Employer Best Practices Webinars** – Insight from experienced trainers on recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans
- **Military 101 Webinars** – A recruiter/HR manager's guide to navigating the military infrastructure
- **Wounded Veteran Employment Webinars** – A comprehensive guide to hiring veterans with disabilities

For more information, or to register for a webinar (which is required), visit the following webpage: [www.hiringourheroes.org/Webinars](http://www.hiringourheroes.org/Webinars).

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## **7. What are The Value Of a Veteran HR Training Webinars?**

A: [The Value Of a Veteran](#) provides human resources consulting and training for organizations that are seeking to improve support, recruitment and retention of military veterans. In support of IHHC, The Value Of a Veteran offers twice-monthly free web seminars that review the basic building blocks of effective veteran recruitment and retention programs and provide hiring managers with actionable tasks they can begin doing now to improve their ability to recruit and retain veterans. Topics covered in the webinar include:

- The top myths and misperceptions about the skills and talents of today's military, and the facts that will empower you to overcome hiring manager resistance to considering veteran applicants.
- Intro to over a dozen approaches to finding military talent, including many low-to-no cost sources, and the types of talent you are likely to find using those resources.
- Practical ideas for conducting Veterans Outreach as part of your recruitment marketing efforts.
- Insight into translating Military Occupational Codes (MOC's) so you can understand a resume written in "military-ese."

For more information, or to register for a webinar (which is required), visit the following webpage: [www.thevalueofaveteran.com/IHHC](http://www.thevalueofaveteran.com/IHHC).

The Value Of a Veteran also provides IHHC members with exclusive, no-cost access to their exceptional Veteran Hiring Guide. Visit their [website](#) to download.

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## **8. What is the Employer of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)?**

A: The ESGR is a Department of Defense organization, established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. ESGR seeks to inform and educate employers about their responsibilities toward employees, who serve in the National Guard and Reserve, as well as to recognize and reward those employers who go "over and above" the requirements of the law. For further information on the ESGR, please visit: <http://www.esgr.mil/site/>.

See **Appendix A** for a printable copy of the Seven Seals Statement of Support (SoS) for ESGR. If you commit to this option, please print the form and return it to the IHHC Administrative Team.

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## **Retention & Support Practices**

### **1. Is there assistance in establishing affinity and/or mentorship programs?**

A: The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs can assist in providing guidance and mentorship in establishing corporate affinity groups and/or mentorship programs. In addition, the following companies have agreed to provide "best practices" on establishing an affinity and/or mentorship program: Sears, AT&T, BMO Financial, and JP Morgan Chase. ***Contact information is available upon request.***

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Contact Name: Rodrigo Garcia, IDVA Asst. Director  
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Contact Email: [Rodrigo.Garcia@illinois.gov](mailto:Rodrigo.Garcia@illinois.gov)

### **2. What is the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA)?**

A: IDVA is a state agency dedicated to empowering veterans, as well as their dependents and survivors, to thrive by assisting them in obtaining the benefits to which they are entitled; by providing long term health care for eligible veterans; by approving educational institutions for GI Bill funding; by administering state grants and benefits to eligible Illinois veterans; and by working with other agencies and non-profits to help veterans address education, mental health, housing, and employment challenges. For further information on IDVA, please visit: <http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans>.

Contact Name: Harry Sawyer, IDVA Field Services Manager  
Contact Phone Number: (312) 814-2745  
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### **3. What is National Able?**

A: [National Able Network](#) is the provider of military-to-civilian employment program models for veterans. National Able's Veterans Services carries out Able's mission as it assists those self-sacrificing individuals of the armed forces in becoming self-reliant members of the workforce while also addressing the physical and emotional damages experienced during their service. National Able Network's Veterans Navigation Assistance Program meets the needs of veterans through a comprehensive service delivery model which addresses personal and professional barriers common among veterans. The integrated program is designed to meet the needs of veterans of all branches, ages, and stages of their career. The program includes specialized job coaching, workplace mentoring, natural workplace supports, customized training, and linkages to supportive services to meet basic needs.

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#### **4. What is CareerOneStop Business Center?**

A: Looking to hire a veteran? Then you probably already know the many reasons that veterans make excellent employees. Their military experience has provided them with education, training, values, leadership skills and teamwork experience.

##### **Translate military skills**

Many veterans have specific skills that can be put to good use in your workplace. To learn about military occupations that may share skills and work experience with the jobs you're hiring for, visit the [Civilian-to-Military Occupation Translator](#). For questions, call 1-877-348-0502.

## **APPENDIX A: Employer Support for the Guard & Reserves (ESGR) Statement of Support**



## STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE GUARD AND RESERVE



We recognize the Guard and Reserve are essential to the strength of our nation and the well-being of our communities.

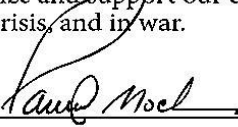
In the highest American tradition, the patriotic men and women of the Guard and Reserve serve voluntarily in an honorable and vital profession. They train to respond to their community and their country in time of need. They deserve the support of every segment of our society.

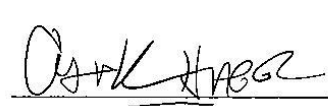
If these volunteer forces are to continue to serve our nation, increased public understanding is required of the essential role of the Guard and Reserve in preserving our national security.

**Therefore, we join other employers in pledging that:**

- We fully recognize, honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).
- We will provide our managers and supervisors with the tools they need to effectively manage those employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve.
- We appreciate the values, leadership and unique skills Service members bring to the workforce and will encourage opportunities to employ Guardsmen, Reservists, and Veterans.
- We will continually recognize and support our country's Service members and their families in peace, in crisis, and in war.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employer

  
Paul E. Mock  
National Chair, ESGR

  
Chuck Hagel  
Secretary of Defense

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

